

# BOOK REVIEWS



Once again we are privileged to bring to your attention a number of interesting and informative publications. Here are several we recently received for review:

- **THE EAGLE AND THE DRAGON: THE UNITED STATES MILITARY IN CHINA, 1901-1937.** By Dennis L. Noble (Contributions in Military Studies 102. Greenwood Press, 1990. 264 Pages. \$39.95). This is one of those "new military history" books that we have been hearing about in which the author concentrates on the social composition of the particular military units he is studying. In this book, the author, despite the limited data he had to work with, focuses his attention on the soldiers of the Army's 15th Infantry Regiment, the sailors who manned the ships of the Asiatic Fleet and the gunboats on China's inland waterways, and the Marines who served both ashore and afloat during the 1920s and 1930s in China and the surrounding waters.

In his various chapters, he examines the men and the nature of their duties, their off-duty pursuits, how they perceived China and the Chinese, and, finally, why some of them chose to remain in China when their terms of service ended. Along the way, he destroys many of the myths that have grown up about duty in China in the 1920s and 1930s and about the men who performed that duty.

This is a most interesting book that all Infantrymen are encouraged to read.

- **THE UNITED STATES ARMY: A DICTIONARY.** Edited by Peter G. Tsouras, Bruce W. Watson, and Susan M. Watson (The Garland Series on U.S. Military Affairs. Garland Publishing, 136 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, 1991. 898 Pages. \$125.00). Although this dictionary is billed as "an academic reference for the serious researcher of the U.S. Army," it is far

more than that. It can certainly be of tremendous value to those in the news media who cover Army affairs; it can be of value to the editors of military-oriented publications; and it can certainly be of help to service school instructors and military doctrine writers. At the same time, the Infantrymen in our field units can learn a lot about their profession simply by wandering through the dictionary's pages, stopping occasionally to peruse the entries.

The dictionary contains a list of acronyms in addition to the actual dictionary entries. Unfortunately, a number of the more current acronyms are missing—SIMNET, LRSU, SOCOM, LOSAT, and NLOS, for example. Strangely, the dictionary does not have an entry for Rangers.

Each dictionary entry does have at least one reference source and many of the entries are cross-referenced. The information in the entries is drawn largely from unclassified official DOD and DA publications.

- **OPERATION JUST CAUSE.** By Lieutenant Clarence E. Briggs III (Stackpole Books, 1990. 176 Pages. \$17.00, Softbound). The author was a rifle company executive officer in the 82d Airborne Division during Operation JUST CAUSE in December 1989. His book is a combination field manual, personal experience monograph, and solid combat narrative. Unfortunately, there is too much of the first two and too little of the last.

His unit arrived in Panama some days before the operation began and managed to get in some good, solid training—not necessarily of the right kind—before JUST CAUSE kicked off. When it did, the author found that his unit had not been properly trained to do all of the things it was eventually called on to do. His unit's experiences, therefore, offer a number of excellent

lessons for all infantry small unit leaders who might be faced with taking part in similar operations in the future.

The author also learned very quickly one personal lesson that all combat infantrymen have learned: When the real bullets start flying, the face of war takes on a different hue. How he and his men faced up to the challenge is another aspect of the book worth considering, although his reasons why soldiers fight their countries' wars can and should be disputed.

- **THE FIRST GOLDEN AGE OF ROCKETRY: CONGREVE AND HALE ROCKETS OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.** By Frank H. Winter (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990. 321 Pages. \$29.95). This is the first comprehensive book we have seen on the history of gunpowder rockets. The author, who is the assistant curator for rocketry at the National Air and Space Museum, emphasizes first the work done by the Englishman William Congreve (the Younger) in creating the world's first true rocket weapon systems, and then switches to the system made by William Hale, another Englishman. The author also tells of the use of rockets in combat operations, of rocket developments in other countries, mainly European, and of the use of rockets for maritime lifesaving purposes and for harpooning whales.

- **EARLY AIRCRAFT ARMAMENT: THE AEROPLANE AND THE GUN UP TO 1918.** By Harry Woodman (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990. 254 Pages. \$29.95). Instead of writing a comprehensive history of early aircraft armament, the author concentrates on the actual weapons, ammunition, gunsights, and mounts that were in general use during World War I. He points out that the machine-guns that were used were originally ground weapons that had to be adapted

for use on aircraft—the Maxim, Hotchkiss, Lewis, Vickers, and Parabellum, among others—and that the entire war period was one marked by large-scale improvisation. (After reading this book, we could not help recalling the efforts of U.S. Army aviators in the 1950s and 1960s to find ways to mount machine-guns and rockets on their helicopters.) The book also contains a large number of photographs, and the author has done a fine job in finding and then expertly using the available written and photographic material.

- **A CONCISE HISTORY OF U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES WITH LINEAGES AND INSIGNIA.** By Geoffrey T. Barker (Anglo-American Printing Company, P.O. Box 41933, Fayetteville, NC 28309-1933. 1988. 218 Pages. \$25.00, Softbound). As might be expected, the bulk of this book (along with an addendum to the main body) is devoted to the lineages and insignia of all officially recognized special operations forces and their predecessors. It is comprehensive and seemingly complete. The author, a retired Special Forces officer, also includes a detailed index and a list of special operations associations. He has done a fine job in producing what must have been a true labor of love.

- **THE VISITOR'S GUIDE TO THE NORMANDY LANDING BEACHES: MEMORIALS AND MUSEUMS.** By Tonie and Valmai Holt (Hunter Publishing, Incorporated, Building 424, Raritan Center, Edison, NJ 08818. 1989. 256 Pages, \$12.95, Softbound). The authors not only describe the French province of Normandy, they also tell of the Allied preparations for the 1944 invasion and then of the various Allied beach landings and airborne operations. They include a number of suggested battlefield tours, plus sketch maps to help along the way. Each tour is both preceded and accompanied by a historical account. All the museums the authors consider worth visiting are also included, as are lists of hotels, restaurants, and tourist offices. This book is heartily recommended to anyone planning to visit Normandy this coming summer, or the World War II buff who wants a

somewhat different view of the 1944 D-Day operations.

- **THE MILITARY BALANCE, 1990-1991.** Published by Brassey's for the International Institute for Strategic Studies. (1990. 245 Pages. \$95.95). Although overtaken by more recent events in the Middle East, this authoritative annual publication remains an extremely useful reference tool. As usual, it assesses (and in some cases corrects) the military strength and defense spending of the 145 countries that maintain armed forces; the entries for each country detail the military organization and list equipment, manpower, and relevant economic data. As is usual, too, it contains essays on strategic arms control developments, short-range nuclear forces, and NATO and Warsaw Pact conventional forces. There is also a loose insert map of Europe that depicts the deployment of key land and air equipment affected by the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty.

- **BRIDGING THE IMJIN: CONSTRUCTION OF LIBBY AND TEAL BRIDGES DURING THE KOREAN WAR (OCTOBER 1952-JULY 1953).** By William R. Farquhar, Jr., and Henry A. Jefferson, Jr. Edited and with an Introduction by Charles Hendricks (Studies in Military Engineering Number 5. Office of History, United States Army Corps of Engineers, 1989. USGPO S/N 008-022-00266-9. 166 Pages. \$5.00, Softbound). The two authors were serving U.S. Army officers when they prepared the original narrative report on which this publication is based. In brief, they tell of the accomplishment of a difficult wartime assignment by the 84th Engineer Construction Battalion. The editor has kept much of the original report and various addenda, as well as 46 of the original 57 photographs. To this number he has added 31 others drawn from various collections. To those Infantrymen who have served in Korea in or near the DMZ and who remember the tremendous flooding problems they faced almost every summer, this bridging effort will be recognized for the tremendous and innovative feat it was.

- **ARMY OFFICER'S GUIDE. 45th EDITION.** By Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Lawrence P. Crocker (Stackpole Books, 1990. 608 Pages. \$17.95, Softbound). In this revised and updated version of what has become a standard reference for old, new, and would-be Army officers, the author offers information on such topics as professional development, promotion procedures, pay and allowances, military courtesies and customs, social obligations, uniforms and insignia, and responsibilities of command. Although it is not an official publication, it has been supported by many Army agencies and read by knowledgeable active duty personnel to ensure its correctness. It also has a section of 16 color pages that show the Army's decorations, service medals, and badges. With graduations and commissioning services approaching, this makes an ideal gift to the young man or woman who might be contemplating an Army officer's career. Units might also consider purchasing copies for their soldiers who are selected for attendance at the Army's Officer Candidate School.

- **ENLISTED SOLDIER'S GUIDE. 2d EDITION.** By Sergeant Major (Retired) Dennis D. Perez and revised by Lieutenant John Warsinske (Stackpole Books, 1990. 224 Pages. \$12.95, Softbound). This informative publication has also been revised and updated and, like the first edition, gives the junior enlisted soldier an easy-to-use information resource. Although the book is designed especially for the first-termer and includes information on such topics as uniforms, pay and allowances, assignments, and educational opportunities, it also makes an excellent gift to a young man or woman who might be planning to join the enlisted ranks of the Army.

- **EISENHOWER: A CENTENNIAL LIFE.** Text by Michael R. Beschloss, photographs edited by Vincent Virga (An Edward Burlingame Book. HarperCollins, 1990. 253 Pages. \$29.95). This is the second such book we have seen that was published to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Dwight David Eisenhower's birth. The biographical narrative traces the former

president's life from birth to death, and in his concluding chapter, Michael Beschloss offers his thoughts on why Eisenhower's presidential reputation collapsed after he left office in 1961 and why it began to revive in the 1970s. He does not offer a similar assessment of Eisenhower's military abilities.

Most of the photographs have never before been published. Unfortunately, a number of them do not have captions, and the captions for others are inaccurate. Overall, though, the book is a fine tribute to an outstanding U.S. military and political leader.

Now here are a number of our longer reviews:

**LIFE: WORLD WAR II.** Edited by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr. (Little, Brown, 1990. 440 Pages. \$50.00).

**IMAGES OF WAR: THE ARTIST'S VISION OF WORLD WAR II.** Edited by Ken McCormick and Hamilton Darby Perry (Orion Books. Crown, 1990. 453 Pages. \$65.00).

Both of these outstanding books have been published for the same reason—to commemorate the 50th anniversary of our country's entry into World War II. Each is organized differently, and each takes a unique editorial position.

The first contains more than 1,000 black-and-white photographs and dozens of maps and chronologies. The photographs were drawn from a variety of archives, including those of the U.S. Government and its World War II allies as well as the archives of those countries that were enemies. It should be pointed out that this book is an updated and completely revised version of LIFE's 1950 large-size World War II picture history.

The second book features the works—most in full color—of some 200 artists from 12 countries who were commissioned during the war by their governments to paint or draw their impressions of it. Fifty of the paintings in the book came from the Soviet Union, most never before available in the West. Some of the artists whose works appear in this book were already famous when the war broke out; others became famous after the war. A number died while covering the war. The editors believe that perhaps

one-third to one-half of the art works used in this book are of museum quality while the remainder are valuable primarily for the historical perspective they present.

---

**"IT NEVER SNOWS IN SEPTEMBER": THE GERMAN VIEW OF MARKET-GARDEN AND THE BATTLE OF ARNHEM, SEPTEMBER 1944.** By Robert J. Kershaw (The Crowood Press, Gipsy Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 6DQ, England. 1990. 364 Pages. Price on request).

The operation under discussion here, MARKET-GARDEN, was one of the major Allied ground-airborne operations conducted during World War II. Designed to thrust through the German defense lines, it turned into only a partial fulfillment of Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery's long-standing desire for a narrow, single-thrust Allied attack that would carry through to Berlin.

Although the operation has received extensive coverage from the Allied side, this is the first English-language published account we have seen of the same operation from the German point of view. Put together by a serving British Army officer, it is an outstanding work in that it contains much material that has never before been published, including interviews with German survivors, photographs from SS archives, and interesting new conclusions.

Students of World War II military operations and airborne enthusiasts should not overlook this book. The German reaction, in particular, was quick and decisive and can serve as a model for the study of anti-airborne operations. By the way, the title is a quotation from a remark made by a German participant as he look skyward on 17 September 1944 to see the mass of descending white parachutes below which dangled U.S. and British paratroopers.

---

**RUSSIAN ROULETTE: AFGHANISTAN THROUGH RUSSIAN EYES.** By Gennady Bocharov. Translated from

the Russian by Alyona Kojevnikov (A Cornelia and Michael Bessie Book. HarperCollins, 1990. 187 Pages. \$18.95). Reviewed by Captain Paul Vivian, United States Army National Guard.

Only a few years have passed since Soviet troops left Afghanistan. But the Soviets are just now trying to come to terms with their Afghan War experience. This book is the latest and one of the best efforts to discuss the meaning of the war for the Soviet Union.

The book itself is a "fun read," although for a reader looking for insights into the conduct of Soviet military operations in Afghanistan, it will be a disappointment. It more properly belongs to the soul-searching genre of military literature: Why were we in Afghanistan? What did we achieve? These are the underlying questions the book addresses. Bocharov's answer, however, is unambiguous. To him the war was unjustified and a terrible waste of fine, young, Soviet men.

Bocharov is a prominent correspondent for the weekly newspaper *Literaturnaiia Gazeta* (The Literary Newspaper). He is not a soldier, but he evidently had had some military experience because he seems to understand the soldiers so well. His portrayal of those soldiers is clearly in the romantic, socialist style. For example, the hero of each chapter is inevitably a good, simple boy from a farm or a small town. He is conscientious and hard-working, and he does his duty without question. And when the young man is seriously wounded, or maimed, or killed, this literary device allows Bocharov to ask the question: "Why this good boy?" and "Was the cause worth the sacrifice?"

In the course of eight years, Bocharov made numerous trips to Afghanistan. His activities in that country are described in a matter-of-fact manner. But there is an underlying sense of duplicity. For while he saw much, he reported little. After all, this was the system, and Bocharov describes in detail how the censorship system worked. But as he makes clear, most of the censorship was self-imposed. Although he never says so explicitly, he communicates a

feeling of sorrow and sinfulness at his inability and failure to communicate the true nature of the Afghan War.

This is not a deep book, but it is a thought-provoking one. If there is a lesson for soldiers in it, it is not that wars are always wrong, but rather that wars must be just in order to warrant the cost in human suffering. Gennady Bocharov believes that many good, young Soviet men were maimed or killed in an unjust cause.

**HANGING SAM, A MILITARY BIOGRAPHY OF GENERAL SAMUEL T. WILLIAMS: FROM PANCHO VILLA TO VIETNAM.** By Colonel Harold J. Meyer (University of North Texas Press, 1990. 183 Pages. \$16.95). Reviewed by Major General Herbert J. McChrystal, Jr., United States Army Retired.

Lieutenant General Samuel T. Williams is one of the Army's genuine characters. Despised by some, admired by many, revered by not a few, General Williams left a bold and unequivocal mark. He was unique. The author of this biography has created an accurate, detailed, and highly interesting picture of how this man combined average intelligence with incredible tenacity and dedication to excellence to become a top-notch field soldier.

Williams joined the Army in 1917, fresh out of high school. He was a competitor, a perfectionist. He earned a commission and performed with distinction during World War I. By 1943, he had overcome his lack of formal education, disqualifying eyesight, and an initial weakness in administrative skills to become a brigadier general and assistant commander of the 90th Infantry Division.

In Mid-July 1944, little more than a month after the division had landed in Normandy, disaster struck. Williams was relieved and reduced to the rank of colonel. According to most knowledgeable witnesses, he was the victim of an effort to preserve the career of his division commander. It had not helped for Sam, in a fit of disgust, to

suggest his commander was a coward.

The author paints a vivid account of this amazing man's refusal to accept defeat. His fight to regain his personal dignity and military reputation was not fought over what might have been. Instead, Williams sought the toughest post-war job of all—command of troops. In those days, few wanted the job. Units were in shambles. Moreover, command posed high risks for his career. He succeeded, turning his 26th Infantry Regiment into a premier unit. After regaining his star, he went on to command the 25th Infantry Division in Korea. Finally, after being awarded his third star, he was selected to help South Vietnam build its army.

General Williams carried a heavy personal cross—his explosive personality. He could, and often would, ignite in a blast of colorful invective when first encountering anything or anyone he thought failed to meet his standard. Subsequently, however, he would normally withdraw to a more balanced reaction. He was not a mean man who delighted in humiliating people, as do some. He reacted from frustration or disbelief that the offender did not grasp his responsibility or the urgency of the situation with the same intensity as he did. Down inside, Sam was a warm and compassionate man.

On occasion, though, his explosiveness got in the way. His tendency to "shoot the messenger" sometimes cut him off from reliable sources of information. The author relates a chilling tale of an informant net that Sam resorted to within the 26th Infantry to the discomfort of a number of his subordinate commanders.

Jack Meyer's book is fascinating for those of us who lived through parts of Hanging Sam's story without knowing all of it. For those of you who fancy yourselves future senior leaders, this book contains many valuable pointers. Sam was a real "pro."

**SECRETS OF THE VIETNAM WAR.** By Lieutenant General Phillip B. Davidson (Presidio, 1990. 214 Pages. \$18.95). Reviewed by Doctor Joe P.

Dunn, Converse College.

General Davidson's first book, *Vietnam at War* (1988), is the best military history of the Vietnam War. This sequel volume, written as an interpretative memoir by the MACV J-2 from 1967-1969, is an equally valuable contribution.

About one-half of the book deals with the order of battle numbers controversy that resulted in the Westmoreland versus CBS lawsuit. As he provides the background and clarifies the issues, Davidson devastates the Sam Adams and CBS charges. In the second half, Davidson explains the reasons the war was fought as it was, the causes for the failures in strategy, and the implications of many of the political and military decisions. He also addresses the myths that still persist about the conflict. In the growing number of "why we lost" summations, this is one of the very best analyses.

Like his first book, this is a must for anyone who contemplates the lessons to be learned from the Vietnam experience. As I read the slim volume in one sitting (unable to put it down), I was struck by its value to us in thinking about the present Gulf crisis.

General Davidson has done it again.

## RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

**THE DUEL: 10 May-31 July 1940: THE EIGHTY-DAY STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHURCHILL AND HITLER.** By John Lukacs, Ticknor and Fields, 1991. 224 Pages. \$19.95.

**JACKBOOT: THE STORY OF THE GERMAN SOLDIER.** By John Laffin. First published in hardcover in 1965. A David and Charles Military Book. Sterling, 1990. 272 Pages. \$8.95, Softbound.

**BALLISTIC MISSILES IN THE THIRD WORLD: THREAT AND RESPONSE.** By W. Seth Carus. Praeger, 1990. 104 Pages. \$34.95.

**TERRORISM AND THE MEDIA: DILEMMAS FOR GOVERNMENT, JOURNALISM, AND THE PUBLIC.** By Yonah Alexander and Richard Latter. Brassey's (U.S.), 1990. 147 Pages. \$19.95.

**PEOPLE AT WAR, 1939-1945.** Edited by Peter Moynihan. First published in hardcover in 1974. A David and Charles Military Book. Sterling, 1990. 216 Pages. \$8.95, Softbound.

**THE OXFORD BOOK OF CANADIAN MILITARY ANECDOTES.** Edited by Victor Suthren. Oxford University Press, 1989. 202 Pages. \$29.95.